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March 24, 2003

Joel Gilbertson, Commissioner Alaska Dep't. of Health And Human Services 350 Main Street, Room 229 PO Box 110601 Juneau, Alaska 99811-0601

Re: Follow-Up

Dear Commissioner Gilbertson:

I enjoyed meeting you at the Alaska Mental Health Board meeting earlier this month. I have been saying for years that people need to get realistic about Alaska's fiscal situation. Unfortunately, the Alaskan public is so used to "free government" and its non-needs based largesse that the Legislature and past Administrations have been paralyzed from acting. You are to be commended for having the courage to take this head-on.

In my letter to the Governor asking to be re-appointed to the Mental Health Board, which I copied to you, I mentioned that our mental health system could save a lot of money and have better outcomes for the people it serves at the same time. I am taking this opportunity to flesh that out with more specifics.¹

I have therefore enclosed:

- 1. Written Testimony By Loren R. Mosher, M.D., for the Joint Committee on Mental Health Reform (JCMHR) April 11, 2000; and
- 2. Neuroleptics and Chronic Illness,

and will have hand delivered to your Anchorage Office:

- 3. *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*, by the award winning science writer, Robert Whitaker; and
- 4. Community Mental Health: A Practical Guide, by Loren R. Mosher and Lorenzo Burti; as well as
- 5. Affidavit of James B. Gottstein, Esq.

¹ The views expressed here are my own and do not officially represent the Mental Health Board's.

Commissioner Gilbertson March 24, 2003 Page 2

I imagine that you won't be able to personally read the two books hand delivered to your Anchorage office (items 3 and 4), but I have included them because you should have them. In my view, anyone setting mental health policy should read them and maybe some member(s) of your staff can do so.

Enclosure Number 2, Neuroleptics and Chronic Illness, is a description of the studies reviewed by Robert Whitaker in researching *Mad in America* that convinced him (and me now) that at least half of the people who enter our mental health system are needlessly turned into chronic, severely disabled, mental patients and a permanent burden on public systems. I will be pleased to provide a copy of these studies to your staff if you would like them. Reading *Mad in America* is, however, the best way in my view to really understand what is going on. Enclosure Number 1, is a very short and updated synopsis of *Community Mental Health: A Practical Guide*, written by Dr. Mosher and Dr. Burti of Italy. *Community Mental Health* is an astoundingly good guide on what must be done to fix our Chronic Mental Illness System. As mentioned, both of these books are being hand delivered under separate cover to your Anchorage office. Even if you don't have time to read them, I urge you to get an open minded person on your staff to do so.

On a much less pleasant note, Item Number 5, Affidavit of James B. Gottstein, which is also being hand delivered under separate cover to your Anchorage office, sets forth facts demonstrating specific acts of serious dishonesty by certain Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities management personnell and which suggest a pattern of such dishonesty as well. I have taken what I consider the rather extraordinary step of preparing this 47 page sworn affidavit with approximately 250 pages of documentary back-up because the previous administration ignored what should have been sufficient documentation of this dishonesty. There seems to be an atmosphere of "so what" and "business as usual" to government employee acts of dishonesty to which I hope you don't subscribe.

At the last Mental Health Board meeting, Deputy Commissioner Bob Labbe made a point of informing the Board that the Department plans to increase system integrity through more provider audits. It will be hard to believe the Department takes integrity seriously if it chooses to ignore dishonesty among its own employees as the last administration did.

Again, I wish you the best of luck in your efforts to make Alaska's mental health system a much more cost-effective one. It is my hope that the information I have provided is useful in this effort.

Yours truly,

/s/

James B. Gottstein

cc: Jeff Jessee Richard Rainery Katsumi Kenaston